

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Council of the Faculty of Arts and Science

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, March 16, 1990

- Present:** C. Bertrand, Chair; E. Gardham; M. Yates; J. Appleby; P. Albert; D. Dicks; S. Ruby; G. Valaskakis; R. Long; J. Gavin; P. Widden; Z. Hamlet; E. Preston; W. Gardiner; W. Knitter; D. Sheps; R. Kilgour; C. Levy; M. Barlow; H. deRomer; G. Decarie; R. Perigoe; M. Giguere; W. Byers; A. Planells; C. Gray; R. Sharma; M. Poirier; C. White; I. Robinson; J. Drysdale; S. Hoecker-Drysdale; G. Newsham; C. Potworowski; M. Brian; C. Davis; M. Mendell; S. Lanthier-O'Connor; C. Ragaven; J. Brown; B. Leonhardt; D. Linder.
- Regrets:** M. Szabo; D. Shapiro; J. Costello; B. Goodman; H. McLachlan.
- Absent:** P. Regimbald; H. McQueen; I. Irvine; G. Trudel; G. Szamosi; E. Budik; B. Cohen; H. Desbarais; Y-L. Khoury; T. Powell; M. Sullivan; R. Dyotte; R. Gossen; M. Moser; J. Benoit.

Documents considered and distributed at this meeting

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| ASFC 90-2M-A | Election/Ratification - Arts and Science Faculty Committees |
| ASFC 90-2M-B | Leisure Studies - Departmental Status |
| ASFC 90-2M-C | Re-scheduling Exams - T.E.S.L. |
| ASFC 90-2M-D | GPA Rule Resolution |
| ASFC 90-2M-E | Grade Standardization |
| ASFC 90-2M-F | Undergraduate Program Evaluation: A Background Report - Dicks |
| ASFC 90-2M-G | Motion to disregard incomplete grades in the calculation of the annual grade point average |

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1340.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

90-2-1 It was moved and seconded (Byers/Newsham) that the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

3. **Approval of the Minutes of January 12, 1990**

90-2-2 It was moved and seconded (Preston/Planells) that the Minutes of the meeting of January 12, 1990 be approved.

CARRIED

4. **Remarks from the Chair**

The Dean welcomed members of Council to the first meeting in the new R. W. Breen Senate Chamber.

He then introduced Madeleine Yates, his new Assistant, to Council.

On behalf of all members of Council he asked that the record show an expression of good wishes to the Concordia Stingers Basketball Team, currently in the Maritimes for the Canadian National Championships.

He emphasized that absolutely no University money had been used for the Senate Chamber, but that it had all come from donations.

Dr. R. K. Agnihotri, a Shastri Fellow, will be at Concordia, primarily in the Department of Education, from March 22 for five weeks. Those interested in further information regarding any public presentations that might be held, should contact Dr. Knitter.

The Registrar's Office had asked the Dean to remind Council members that nominations are due for the Concordia Medal, the Malone Medal, the O'Brien Medal and the First Graduating Class Award.

The Deans had been asked to put together a mission statement. He hoped to have his ready in time for the meeting of Chairs on March 29th and for release to Council shortly thereafter.

5. **Questions and Announcements**

Drysdale asked what type of asbestos had been used in the room. Albert responded that it was cellulose.

6. **Elections/Ratifications - Arts and Science Faculty Committees**

ARTS & SCIENCE FACULTY COUNCIL

Two (2) undergraduate students (1 year term)

Tammy Powell
Joanne Benoit

RATIFIED

SENATE

One full-time faculty member (three year term ending May 31, 1992. Prof. D. Sheps has resigned.

M. Catry-Verron

ACCLAIMED

SEARCH COMMITTEES

Chair of Exercise Science - R. Pallen
Chair of History - L. Sanders
Chair of Sociology & Anthropology - P. Thornton
Chair of Communication Studies - J. Herz
Chair of Modern Languages - W. Hubbard
Chair of Teaching English as a Second Language - A. Broes
Chair of Psychology - J. Moore
Principal of Lonergan College - R. Tittler

ACCLAIMED

7. **Leisure Studies - Departmental Status**

90-2-3 It was moved and seconded (Valaskakis/Leonhardt) that the Recreation and Leisure Studies Programme become recognized as a department within the Faculty of Arts & Science.

Byers asked the size of the smallest unit now in Arts and Science.

The Dean responded that the Programme in Library Studies was smaller in terms of full-time tenure track positions. The Department of Journalism has three tenure-track positions.

Valaskakis spoke in favour of the motion and felt that the request was justified.

The Dean explained that the main advantage for Leisure Studies would be representation on Council; also the stipend paid to the Chair of a Department might be a little greater than that paid to the Director of a Programme. Other than the foregoing, there would be no cost implications at all.

CARRIED

8. Re-scheduling Exams - T.E.S.L.

90-2-4 **It was moved and seconded (Newsham/Levy) that Professor G. Newsham be permitted to give her final exam on Thursday, April 12, 1990, the day after the last day of classes.**

Newsham explained that she would be giving a paper at an International Conference in Greece on the Monday, did not intend to return immediately after the conference was finished, and did not want her marks to be late.

Brown stated that there had been a move toward providing students with as much time as possible to prepare for their exams, and this was going in the opposite direction.

90-2-5 **It was moved and seconded (Preston/Brown) that Professor Newsham be permitted to give her final exam on Thursday, April 12, 1990, provided that she furnish Vice-Dean Ruby with a signed list from her students indicating their agreement with the arrangement.**

Byers asked if we were establishing a precedent as well as a procedure by considering this request at Council.

The Dean responded that if Council did not want this type of request coming before it, it could so rule.

Newsham pointed out that the concern had always been that students should get a full thirteen weeks of instruction. This year there is one day between the last day of classes and the first day of exams.

90-2-6 It was moved and seconded (Knitter/Ragaven) that the motion be tabled.

CARRIED

9. **GPA Rule Regulation**

The Dean explained that Steering Committee had received three motions from the Department of Physics. After review it was felt that two of them were more directly applicable to the work of the GPA Task Force. The third had been sent on to Council.

90-2-7 It was moved and seconded (Drysdale/Decarie) that incomplete grades should be disregarded for the purpose of calculating the annual grade point average.

Drysdale explained that under the present procedures for the calculation of the annual grade point average the Registrar's Office included incomplete grades, even in those cases where the grade had been changed through completion and where a second entry had been made on the student's record. The inclusion of the incomplete grade resulted in double counting of a single course for which there were two entries. This raised the question of whether they should be included at all in these calculations, particularly during the period when the student was still eligible for late completion. In the calculation of the GPA for graduation, incomplete grades were disregarded.

Levy asked what would appear on the transcript.

The Dean explained that the transcript would remain as it was, that is both entries would stay, but the F Incomplete would be disregarded in the calculation.

Vice-Dean Ruby expressed a feeling of discomfort with the motion. She felt the Registrar's Office should have been consulted to determine the ramifications of the motion.

Decarie pointed out that the objections hadn't touched the main thrust of the motion, that grades should simply not be double counted.

Vice-Dean Ruby reminded Council that another argument could be made. If a student had two B Incompletes, and they were not taken into consideration when the GPA was being calculated, some of the grades might be lower.

White wondered what the possibility would be of postponing consideration of interpretations 2 and 3 and simply make the motion read that incomplete grades that have already been completed be disregarded.

Dicks said that Engineering had a provision to count only the second grade if a course had to be repeated.

Byers felt that the problems the motion addressed were more important than the objections which had been raised, and recommended that the question be called.

Sheps responded that the problem was that the GPA was being used for too many purposes. It was simply a picture or a code that gave you, at a glance, a configuration or profile for final grades - a kind of shorthand that could signal to a student that he was in trouble.

Vice-Dean Ruby commented on questions raised about why the GPA was passed. She felt that the problem was that Council was not prepared to do its homework, and get input from the Registrar's Office before voting on something of this magnitude. She would prefer that this homework be done before proceeding any further.

CARRIED

90-2-8 It was moved and seconded (Sharma/Linder) that the G.P.A. rule be amended to allow students to write supplemental exams and complete incompleted courses regardless of their G.P.A.

White asked if there was a mechanism to remove a person from conditional standing, between annual evaluations.

Ruby responded that at the present time there was no such mechanism. A procedure would have to be developed.

Dicks pointed out that the motion just passed might provide the mechanism.

Byers felt that we had passed the GPA rule without having debated the implications. In the case of this motion he would really like some explanation of the ramifications.

Brian asked whether it was "failed" or "conditional" students that were being identified by this motion.

The Dean responded that use of the word "regardless" had led him to believe that it referred to both.

90-2-9 It was moved and seconded (Brown/Byers) that the motion be tabled and sent to the GPA Task force for further study.

CARRIED

10. Grade Standardization

90-2-10

It was moved and seconded (Linder/Leonhardt) that the grading system used in all departments in the Arts and Science Faculty be standardized and that the grading system be:

A +	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B +	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C +	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D +	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	0-49

Linder explained that the University Calendar used to print conversion tables, one for converting numerical grades to letter grades and the other to convert letter grades to their numerical equivalents. While the University had decided to do away with numerical grades, some professors still gave them, and in the absence of conversion tables a professor can assign any letter he likes to a numerical grade.

Sharma was very strongly opposed to the motion and asked Council either to table it or to defeat it. He maintained that McGill had found a scheme to limit the potential damage caused by a GPA, and he intended to take it to the Task Force for debate.

The University has an official grading policy that uses shaded letters that cannot be changed except through Senate, and Frost therefore suggested that Sharma's proposition be moved out of order.

While opposing the motion Knitter agreed with Linder that students have a right to know what their course assignments add up to. A grading scheme was in place - A is excellent work, B is above average. The problem could be solved much more easily simply by asking a professor to be clear about what the grade means.

Byers also opposed the motion. It made the error of equating a precise numerical grade with the quality of a student's work, which was a mistake.

Leonhardt told Council that he had originally been luke warm about this motion, however he had become aware of a department where a 90 or 91 got a B-. If that were to go to the Registrar's Office and be turned into a grade point average it would be very unfair to the student. If numerical equivalents were not the answer, some standardization was certainly needed.

Vice-Dean Ruby pointed out that noone had mentioned that a Professor could mark an assignment on the basis of the degree of difficulty of the exercise.

Perigo said that it was his understanding that individual professors are required to tell their students how they arrived at their grade.

The Dean assured him that they were.

In response to a comment from Gray, Decarie argued that a mark either meant something or it didn't. Since we had been committed to letter grades, then clearly the numbers have to relate in some way to the letter grades.

Byers commented that letter grades are the official grades and to force literal conversion would be a disaster.

Vice-Dean Valaskakis stated that this issue had been debated over and over again and suggested that perhaps it should be sent to the GPA Task Force even though it was not directly in their realm.

Sharma argued that the letter grade derived its meaning in some ways from the numbers particularly in the sciences and felt there should be an equivalency table.

Brian agreed that there are differences in Arts and Science - in Science you started out with a numerical grade and ended up with a letter. In History or English you were better able to get a hold on a letter grade. She was not happy with the equivalents presented by the students but felt that we should move closer to the McGill model if we agreed that a grade point average of 2 was marginal.

Sheps responded that grades did not stem from numbers, but conceptions of what was first, second or third class work.

DEFEATED

11. Undergraduate Program Evaluation: A Background Report -Dicks

The Dean explained that in the planning process that had been going on in Arts and Science for the past four years, a good deal of attention had been given in the first

round of the process, to graduate programmes and graduate education. In the second round it will be clear that the undergraduate education would now be the focus of attention. In that context it seemed appropriate that an evaluation of the academic programmes offered at the undergraduate level be undertaken. The Curriculum Committee was asked to bring forward a document on how we might mandate the study of the academic programmes at the undergraduate level.

Steering Committee had hoped the objectives and goals, set out in the document, might be discussed today, and that it would be easier to choose a model of evaluation once a clear sense of what the evaluation should accomplish had been established. He would hope that the evaluation would be one done at the departmental level, with the participation of the department as the key element. Then it would be an evaluation done in a spirit of improving the quality of the academic programme, and improving as well the delivery of that programme. In other words to evaluate not just the content of the programme but how it was being taught. He felt it was imperative that this discussion take place at Council once members have familiarized themselves with the document.

Sheps responded that he had read the document, but didn't feel that four o'clock was the time to start debate on even part of it.

The Dean responded that Steering Committee had been prepared to see the debate put off until the next meeting of Council. However, it would appear at the top of the agenda for the next meeting of Council, and members would have to be prepared to discuss not only the objectives and goals but also what the model might be.

12. Other Business

90-2-11

It was moved and seconded (Hoecker-Drysdale/Drysdale) that a recommendation be sent to Senate that a Committee be established to look into the question of providing a study period of at least five days prior to the examination period, and that the examination period itself be limited to make it a more meaningful exercise.

Hoecker-Drysdale argued that our present examination arrangements create problems, particularly for the students and generates situations where professors engage in creative manipulation of the rules. Generally, exams start too soon after classes are over, giving the students no time at all for preparation, that is to say, no study period. A great deal of importance is assigned exams, sometimes as much as 40% - 50% of the mark. She proposed that a committee be appointed to look at the examination set-up in the University, to be composed of professors, students and administrators. Further she wanted them to specify that consideration be given not only to the examination arrangements, but also to the matter of a study period for students of at least five days before the examination period begins, and that consideration also be given to shortening

the examination period which currently lasts one month, and induces all kinds of creative manipulation by professors.

The Dean responded that if such a group was set up it would have to be a university-wide group, and suggested that Council recommend to Senate that such a group be established.

Vice-Dean Ruby asked how this would differ from the work of the Senate Task Force on Examinations which had been meeting for the past year and had only recently completed its report. She assured Council that every aspect of the examination process Had been very closely studied.

The Dean suggested the tabling of the motion until the report had been looked at.

Hoecker-Drysdale responded that she would rather send a message to Senate that we are concerned about these problems and will take them up if they are not addressed in the Report. We can table it for the next meeting, but it is an academic issue related not only to the scheduling of examinations, but with providing students with adequate time to study for examinations.

The Dean agreed to call the question and then send the motion to Senate as a way of moving the report forward.

CARRIED

13. **Next Meeting**

Friday, May 11, 1990, in DL-200, Loyola Campus

14. **Adjournment**

90-2-? It was moved and seconded (Knitter/Robinson) that the meeting be adjourned at 1600 hrs.

